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SUBJECT: JORDAN'S NEW NATIONAL MINE ACTION PLAN: THE NEW DEAL?

1. (U) Summary: While the National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation (NCDR) has been in existence since 2002, it was not until last month that NCDR could really claim to be in charge of demining activities in Jordan. Under Prince Mired's leadership and with the blessing of the King, NCDR on June 7 unveiled Jordan's new National Mine Action Plan (NMAP) that outlines the steps Jordan needs to take to clear its remaining 203,094 mines (or 314 minefields) before the May 1, 2009, Ottawa Treaty deadline. This comprehensive plan recognizes that another entity, perhaps a yet to be founded civilian-run company, needs to be introduced to achieve this goal. It also recognizes the need for continued mine risk education and survivor and victim assistance. NCDR's goal in meeting the 2009 deadline is tied to the GOJ's overall poverty alleviation efforts, which envisions the turnover of arable land once it is deemed mine-free. End Summary.

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JORDAN'S DEMINING EFFORTS TO DATE  
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2. (U) Jordan, through the Royal Engineering Corps (REC), has been engaged in demining efforts, mainly along its western frontier, since 1993. In 1998, the GOJ signed and ratified the Ottawa Treaty which came into effect May 1999. This agreement requires each signatory to become "mine free" within ten years from its signature date of accession. In accordance with the treaty, Jordan completed the destruction of its stockpiles of 92,342 antipersonnel landmines in April 2003. The GOJ considers the clearance of landmines to be essential if development and poverty alleviation are to accelerate in the border region.

3. (U) These landmines were primarily laid during the 1967 War in the Jordan River Valley and Wadi Araba, and in the early 1970s along the Syrian border. Basic map records are available for all laid minefields, including those supplied by the Government of Israel for the 73,000 Israeli mines planted in Jordan Territory in wartime. All minefields are marked and records and sketches are retained to aid in the REC's mine collection efforts. Fortunately, since the minefields are marked, civilian accidents and injuries have been kept low; the majority of the incidents have involved actual deminers. In the two year period from 2002 to 2004, there were 25 reported landmine accidents, nearly all of which involved military deminers. This relatively low incident rate has earned Jordan recognition as a "mine safe" country.

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NCDR'S MINE ACTION PLAN IN SIX EASY STEPS  
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4. (U) The overall objective of the NMAP is to provide a multi-year, multi-pronged strategic approach to mine action in Jordan managed by a sole national mine action authority, NCDR. REC is no longer in charge of demining actions. Instead, through REC and the proposed civilian company, NCDR is implementing one of NMAP's six mine action goals, namely the physical task of demining.

5. (U) The first goal outlined in the NMAP is to create an additional, civilian company to assist REC in clearing the remaining minefields in accordance with international standards more expeditiously. Presently, the REC is clearing the remaining fields at two million square meters annually; however, this must be increased to eight million square meters for the remaining 35 million square meters to be cleared by the May 2009 deadline. In order to do this, NMAP has set the following objectives: 1) creation of National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) based on the principles of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS); 2) develop, train, and deploy staff capable of applying Total Quality Management (TQM) principles to mine action (e.g. quality assurance and quality control) which is presently not practiced in Jordan as defined by the IMAS; 3) clear the Israeli mines in the Wadi Araba/Aqaba region. These have not yet been touched; their presence could prove a serious complication for development plans, including plans for improved tourism infrastructure and for the Red-Dead water conveyance project; and 4) begin/accelerate mine clearance along the Syrian border and in the Jordan River Valley through the establishment of a national demining company capable of clearing five and a half million square meters annually.

16. (U) This last objective offers the greatest promise for mine clearance. Through a civilian-managed demining company, the GOJ will have addressed its two largest problems in demining operations today: the relatively low rates of production, and the lack of a national non-military demining capacity. The creation of a national civilian entity has the political backing of the GOJ, and pledges of start-up capital from the Jordan Armed Forces (JAF). Given the large number of ex-deminers available to work in Jordan, recruitment and refresher training is not seen as a major obstacle.

17. (U) The second NMAP goal calls for a Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) to pinpoint the basic information required to develop and manage the NMAP. The survey would provide the data needed to prioritize, plan, and report on progress being made toward the NMAP milestones. It would gauge the socio-economic impact the remaining minefields have in each region and assist in determining a logical mine clearance prioritization process based on poverty reduction criteria. To ensure the highest standards for mine action are being met, NCDR intends to closely work with UNDP, UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the Survey Action Center (SAC), a Washington-based NGO specializing in mine clearance LISes.

18. (U) The GOJ recognizes that occurring simultaneously with mine clearance, it must also further develop a national Survivor and Victim Assistance (SVA) policy that includes: disability policy and law; first aid and primary health care (mainly for on-the-scene incidents); hospital-medical care; rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration. NGOs such as the Landmine Survivors Network, World Health Organization, National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons, and Hashemite Charitable Society for Soldiers with Special Needs are expected to take an active role in the GOJ's initial policy formulation.

19. (U) According to the Ottawa Treaty, the definition of "survivors" and "victims" consists of not only the person(s) involved in the mine accident, but also their immediate families and the communities in which they live. Thus, the GOJ plans to include in its SVA policy the need for long-term support and reintegration programs to those adversely affected by landmines. However, even more critical is to have the best medical care and facilities possible to ensure these victims become survivors. In accordance with this goal, the French-funded National Rehabilitation Center for Amputees (NRCA) at the King Hussein Medical Center in Amman will be completed in December 2005. This facility will provide workshops, rehabilitation equipment, and care to 2,400 Jordanians, of which roughly 320 are landmine survivors.

10. (U) Increased efforts in mine risk education (MRE) through the launching of a national marketing program is the focus of goal four. To date, MRE has been carried out sporadically and under the auspices of many organizations and ministries. It is NCDR's goal to provide structure to all MRE activities by first performing a needs assessment and creating a baseline from which all subsequent messages and community outreach is tailored. A follow-on to basic MRE will be to undertake a train-the-trainers program based on the new MRE policy and messages. Once this corps of trainers has been educated, they will begin to deliver the MRE program to all high-risk communities in an effort to reduce the number of landmine incidents even further.

11. (U) Goal five focuses on Jordan's longer-term desire to become a regional advocate for globalization and implementation of the Ottawa Treaty. NCDR will advance this goal by helping draft Jordanian legislation that fully implements the Ottawa Treaty. This would firmly cement NCDR as the head of the GOJ's mine clearance efforts and the law would place the onus of responsibility on the GOJ to rid Jordan of mines, rather than on the military, as it is today.

In addition, NCDR also intends to host a Middle East-North Africa Treaty Conference to encourage the 13 remaining countries of this region to sign the Treaty. Jordan already hosted one such conference in April 2004, and hopes that by hosting another, more countries would become signatories and move towards demilitarization in the region. The GOJ's other long-term goal is to turn the national company into a money generating mine clearance entity after Jordan itself is mine-free by competing for projects throughout the region. The sixth and final goal relates to the actual structuring of NCDR itself and the handling of NCDR's operational costs.

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DONOR ASSISTANCE NEEDED TO MEET FUNDING SHORTFALLS  
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12. (U) The NMAP is an ambitious and well-thought out plan to enable Jordan to become mine free by 2009. But it is not without cost, which is where donor support becomes crucial. If this plan were to be implemented as-is, the total estimated cost from present to 2009 is 47.79 million USD, of which 33.22 million would come from donors.

113. (U) Prior to the official unveiling of NCDR's national plan, all the current donors (including Australia, Canada, European Commission, Great Britain, Japan, Norway, and the U.S.) met for the first time on June 7 to discuss next steps in aid and assistance to demining in Jordan. The meeting provided the opportunity for each participant to share what it is/is not willing to offer. All the donors agree that NCDR,s taking the lead for all mine action activities is a good thing, and even better is the launch of a national company to assist in mine clearance. The main outcome of the donors' meeting was the agreement that all the donors, local representatives would meet on a regular basis to discuss Jordan's progress in demining and how each donor can most effectively assist.

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